

The claimed invention can be used in connection with **any** set of already installed communications drivers, and with any applications program capable of using the communications drivers, by simply installing a shim that intercepts calls to the communications drivers, without the need to modify the applications program to issue a modified set of function calls in order to invoke the encryption and authentication functions. By intercepting **ordinary** function calls, without reference to encryption functions, the claimed invention can be used with **any** application and **any** set of communications drivers. In contrast, an application program that uses the secure sockets layer for encryption is required to use a special, modified set of function calls in order to request encryption, thus limiting the encryption function to applications written specifically for the secure sockets layer.

In view of this clear distinction between the claimed invention and the arrangement disclosed by Elgamel, withdrawal of the rejection and expedited passage of the application to issue is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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